

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS A COM-
FORT TO CHRISTIANS ON THE DEATH OF
PIOUS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS. 4

A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED JUNE 14, 1799,
AT THE INTERMENT OF THE
REV. BENJAMIN BRIGHAM. A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FITZWILLIAM,
STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

WHO DIED THE 11th OF THE SAME MONTH, IN THE
58th YEAR OF HIS AGE, AND THE 29th OF HIS
MINISTRY.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
BY JOSEPH LEE, A. M. K
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN ROYALSTON.
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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE
IN FITZWILLIAM, AND OTHERS.

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PREACHED JUNE 14 1792.

AT THE INVITEMENT OF THE

R. W. BENJAMIN BISHOP/M. A.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN

AT NEW JERSEY.

WHO DIED THE 14TH OF THE SAME MONTH IN THE

20TH YEAR OF HIS AGE AND THE 2ND OF HIS

M. A. 1792.



B. JOHNSON
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN

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A
F U N E R A L
DISCOURSE.

TRULY solemn and interesting is the appearance of this assembly. Which way soever we turn, the dejected countenance and the falling tear meet our eye.—We need not ask the occasion of this.—The painful tidings have reached our ears—have affected our hearts, and we are come to join in the general grief.—Our acquaintance and friends, the christian, and the minister, whom we greatly respected, *is no more. He is shrouded in death.*—We have taken up his body, with mournful steps, have brought it to the house of prayer, and made supplication to our GOD.

We are now to attend to what the LORD our GOD teaches, in his word, for our support, and,

consolation, on this afflictive occasion—for our direction in improving it to his glory, and our furtherance in the way to Heaven. Here, though poorly qualified, I am, by particular desire, to take a part—a part, which I have not expected to perform, or to see performed—as I have often thought, my dear brother *deceased*, would have been, before this, called to do it for my surviving friends.

This christian office will now be attempted, by considering the sentiments suggested by the inspired Apostle, in

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS,
IV CHAP. 13, 14, VERSES.

BUT I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU TO BE IGNORANT, BRETHREN, CONCERNING THEM WHO ARE ASLEEP, THAT YE SORROW NOT EVEN AS OTHERS WHO HAVE NO HOPE. FOR IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN, EVEN SO THEM ALSO WHO SLEEP IN JESUS, WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM.

To mourn for the *dead* is what both reason and christianity teach us. The ancient saints mourned for *their dead*. When men of virtue and goodness died, GOD expected and required his people to mourn ; and reprov'd them when they did not : *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart ; and merciful men are taken away, none con-*

*sidering that the righteous is taken from the evil to come.** It seems the christians at Thessalonica were not thus insensible, but lamented the death of their friends immoderately, or expressed their grief indecently, like the heathens; to remedy which evil, the apostle suggests some instructive and consolatory truths. He does not blame them for their sorrow, but for the irregularity, or excess of it. "Grace does not destroy nature, but regulates it; nor reason, but rectifies it; nor takes away the affections, but moderates them." Excessive grief, on the one hand, and insensibility, on the other, are highly criminal.

The Apostle, in the text, speaks of death as a sleep. After sleep there is an awaking. Saints will awake from the sleep of death. As after sleep we rise refreshed, so at the resurrection, the saints will rise refreshed and comforted.

Those who know not the gospel, have no certain hope concerning their dead: But among christians, the righteous rest in hope; and surviving friends have the cheering expectation that they shall be raised again to immortal felicity and glory. *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus, will GOD bring with Him.* The apostle speaks to them

* Isaiah lvii. 1.

as those who believed the death and resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, on which the truth of christianity rests, and teaches them to infer from *his* resurrection the resurrection of the saints.

WE ARE HERE TAUGHT,

That the resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is a proof, that those who sleep in him, shall be raised again to life : And—that the hope of the resurrection should mitigate our grief, and comfort us, when bereaved, by the death, of our pious relatives and friends.

My design at this time, is to illustrate these truths, and apply them to the present occasion.

We are then, first to consider, that the resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is an evidence that those, who sleep in him, shall be raised again to life.

Though my hearers will permit me to take it for granted, that the LORD JESUS *is risen indeed*, I would observe briefly, that those, who have felt the power of the gospel, have in themselves, a proof of his resurrection, the most convincing of any. The gospel operating upon their hearts, quickening them to the divine life, and forming them after the divine image, gives them undoubt-

ed evidence, that JESUS now liveth, and dispenseth life and salvation to his people.

The scriptures, both of the old, and new Testament, attest, the future resurrection of the dead. The saints in all ages, have died in the faith of this.

The resurrection of the dead, is so connected with the resurrection of CHRIST, that to deny it, is, in effect, to deny that CHRIST is risen, and so to sap the foundation of the christian faith. For the apostle says, *If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is CHRIST not risen : And if CHRIST be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Then they also who have fallen asleep in CHRIST are perished.** To illustrate the apostle's reasoning, and confirm the point under consideration, it may be observed : That the resurrection of JESUS shows the possibility of the resurrection of the dead—that although the human body returns to the dust, Almighty power can re-animate it.—Cannot he, who at first, formed our bodies of the dust of the ground, cause each particle to return to its proper place, and give the breath of life ?

As JESUS CHRIST was delivered for our offences, so was he raised for our justification. His resurrection, completed the foundation, laid in his

* 1 Cor. xv. 13, &c.

death, for our pardon, and justification unto life. By dying, he paid the debt of our sins, and in his resurrection, received our acquittance. On account of his discharge from the power of death, we, believing in him, receive our discharge from the penalty of sin. In this view, the redemption of our bodies from the grave, becomes necessary, as the finishing part of our justification. At the resurrection we shall be completely delivered, *from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD.*

*JESUS CHRIST is the head of his church, his mystical body, of which every believer is a member in particular.** He, as their head, rose from the dead: This assures us, that his body, the church, shall be raised also. The mighty power of GOD exerted in his resurrection, was exerted in him, in this character: Wherefore we must conclude that his *body*, the church, and every member of it, will be raised also.

There is a near union between CHRIST, and believers in him. He dwells in them by his Spirit, and they abide in him by faith.† Death shall not separate them from his love and care.† Wherefore, he will not leave them in the grave forever.

* 1 Cor. xii. 27. † John vi. 56. Rom. viii. 11, Gal. ii. 20. † Rom. viii. 35,—39.

Believers are *predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of GOD.** This they are, in a measure at present, when *they know Him, the powers of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.†* This uniformity will not be perfected, unless they be raised from the dead, and exalted together with Him in glory.

Finally, The LORD JESUS CHRIST rose from the dead, as the *first fruits of them who sleep,†* as the earnest, and pledge, that those who die in him shall rise again. "The full harvest follows the first fruits." Wherefore we conclude, that although, the bodies of believers moulder to dust, they shall be raised again to life.

It may be proper to remark here, That although the foregoing observations apply chiefly, to those who sleep in JESUS, we may nothence infer, that the wicked and unbelieving shall not be raised also; For it is as expressly revealed that *some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt, as others to everlasting life§* and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who is the final judge of all, has said *That all who are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they who have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.¶*

* Rom. viii. 29. † Phil. iii. 10. † 1. Cor. xv. 20.

§ Dan. xii. 2. ¶ John v. 28, 29

Let us consider secondly, That the hope of the resurrection of the saints should mitigate our sorrow, and comfort us, when bereaved by the death of our pious relatives and friends.

There is such an union of hearts between friends, and relatives, especially in the nearer connections, that when it is broken by death, the most painful sensations are felt, and sorrow and mourning, on such occasions are, as reasonable, as natural. The mournful tear is due to deceased merit. It is but decent we should recollect with sorrow, the loss we sustain by the removal of friends. The comfort and blessing, they were to us demand, that we should feel their separation from us, and retain an affectionate remembrance of them. Insensibility in such case argues a depraved heart;—an heart unmoved by virtue and goodness, and void of gratitude. What virtuous heart can remain insensible, and without pain, when the most pleasing ties of love and friendship are dissolved?—When those, with whom, and for whom, we wished to live, are taken from us? Who does not feel, who does not mourn, when *lover and friend are put from us, and our acquaintance into darkness?*

But we should guard against over much sorrow. Religion affords abundant matter of support and

consolation in such trying scenes. We may then, have strong consolation in CHRIST JESUS. If we suitably attend to what GOD teaches us, we shall have beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*—shall have comfort, which will more than balance our sorrows, and benefit, which will exceed our loss.

A just view and use of the doctrine of the resurrection of the saints, will greatly comfort us.

FOR IT HENCE APPEARS,

That the death of the righteous is not the end of their existence. The body indeed, at death, returns to earth, as it was ; but the spirit, the immortal and rational part, ascends to GOD who gave it.† The wicked, it is true, when they die and are buried, lift up their eyes in torments ;† but the righteous are convoyed by holy angels to Abraham's bosom, the regions of bliss and glory. What JESUS said to the thief on the cross, is verified to every believer, when he dies ; To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.§ This leads us to observe,

That the saints are happy after death. "They immediately pass into glory." Blessed are the dead who die in the LORD. We are to contem-

* Isai. lxi. 3. † Eccl. xii. 7. † Luke xvi. 23.

§ Luke xxiii. 43.

plate our departed pious friends, not only as removed to, but as happy in, another state. *They cease from their labors,** their corruption and weakness are buried in the grave, and their purified souls ascend to be *ever with the LORD*, and *behold his glory*.

Believers desire to see CHRIST in his glory. For this CHRIST prayed in their behalf; *I will that those whom thou hast given me, be where I am; that they may behold my glory.†*

Those who know all necessary truth, *as it is in JESUS*, have, in this life, a glimpse of this glory; they see it, as through a glass, darkly; and it attracts their hearts, engages them to love the LORD, to trust in him, to live to him, and derive all their comfort *and support from Him*: *But when the clogs of flesh and blood are laid aside, they will see as they are seen, and know as they are known.†*—How unspeakable is the happiness of our pious friends, when thus admitted to a view of the glory of CHRIST! What their amazement and joy, when all sublunary objects are vanished, when nothing but “infinite perfection, as it appears in the person of the adorable JESUS,” opens to their view, and when their whole souls are conformed to his likeness;—And shall we excessively mourn for our

* Rev. xiv. 13. † John xvii. 24. † 1 Cor. xviii. 12.

pious friends, who have left this vale of imperfection and tears? Ought we not rather to rejoice, that they *have fought the good fight, have finished their course, have kept the faith, and are entered into the joy of their LORD?* We should not so feel our loss, as not to rejoice, and thank GOD for the dignity and happiness, to which he has exalted them.

While their souls are thus happy, the bodies of the saints are at rest in their graves.

Death and the grave excite gloomy thoughts. We shudder to think of being banished from the light of the sun, from the converse of friends, and shut up in the cold caverns of the earth, to be food for worms. But through JESUS CHRIST the grave becomes a bed of repose to the saint. *The righteous has hope in his death, yea, his flesh rests in hope.**—He rests from the toils, the pains and burdens of the present state: His dust is the care of CHRIST, who will preserve all its particles; and when the appointed time is come, will collect, re-unite, and raise them to life.

When therefore, we lay the bodies of our friends in the grave, do we not house them well? And may we not look forward, with comfort to the resurrection-morning, when they shall be raised in-

* Prov. xiv. 32, and Psalm xvi. 9.

corruptible, and put on immortality?—Our friends are now lovely in our eyes ; but how inconceivably more glorious, will they then appear?—How noble their forms, when moulded anew? How amiable and beauteous their countenance, when, like Moses, they shine with rays of divine light, and love beaming upon them? Let this comfort us when we are laying them in the dust. For,

We shall see them again all glorious and happy.—It is not an eternal farewell which we take of our friends at death. We are separated for a time only, to meet again, to meet in joy, never more to part.

The Apostle's argument seems to suppose, that friends and relatives, in the resurrection, will know each other. This adds weight to it, and makes it peculiarly pertinent. Must it not support and comfort survivors to think, they shall again see their esteemed friends, and rejoice with them, in the presence of their heavenly Father?—That benevolence of heart, which is essential to virtue and happiness, will dispose the saints to rejoice at meeting the greatest stranger, and even one who had been an enemy, in the kingdom of GOD. In Heaven, all are friends, and all are happy. And will not the beginnings of virtuous friendship here, be perfected above? Next to a sight of GOD and

the LAMB, will not the meeting with those, who are near and dear to us in this life, give us joy in the regions of love? After a short separation here, how joyous is the meeting of cordial friends? But this can give us but a faint idea of the felicity of those, who, in the present world, have been companions in the faith, the hope, and tribulations of the gospel, when they shall meet in their *Father's house*, there to abide forever.—No selfish love will actuate any.—Their love and joy will be mutual, spiritual and eternal.—Pure love, and holy friendship will actuate those, who, in this state, were connected as pastors and people, as husbands and wives, as parents and children, as friends and acquaintance. Being made *like unto the angels of GOD*, they will, with inexpressible delight, unite together in ascribing *honor and glory, blessing and praise, unto him, who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood*.—And may not the hope of this, now comfort us, concerning our departed friends? Friendship here, amidst all our weakness, is a source of vast delight; but it will be infinitely more so in Heaven. If we are the *followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*, it cannot be long before we shall rejoin our beloved relatives, and commence a friendship without alloy, or sinful imperfection.

Finally here, Our pious relatives, after the resurrection, will be welcomed into the blissful mansions, which JESUS has prepared for them, there to abide forever. If then, after passing the percolation of the grave, they are to be raised to eternal life, and put into possession of everlasting blessedness, let us not mourn to excess, but *comfort one another with these words.**

WE PROCEED TO APPLY THE SUBJECT.

1. One obvious remark which we may and ought to make is, That our heavenly Father richly provides for our support, and comfort, under the troubles and sorrows which attend our pilgrimage state.

In this world we have much tribulation. It is natural to this state, and necessary for our trial, correction and improvement in piety and virtue. Our gracious GOD does not leave us comfortless, but affords us supports and consolations, more than enough to counterballance all our sorrows. Had our GOD only encouraged us to obedience by the promise of future rewards, and given us so much strength, as finally to rise superior to our toils and troubles, it would have been a display of rich grace. But He has done much more—His grace is *abundantly* sufficient for us—He overlooks all our un-

* Cor. v, 18.

worthiness—strengthens us with might in the inner man—bids us *be of good cheer*—and gives us a prospect and foretaste of future happiness, that we may *go on our way rejoicing*. In particular, when pained at the removal of our friends from us, we have the pleasing assurance of their rising again, and our meeting and *entering* with them *into the joy of our LORD*.

2. We are hence led, highly to value and improve the consolations which the gospel proposes to us. They are given us for use, and should be as diligently improved as any other privilege or favor. If we duly attend to them, they will animate us to duty, relieve us, when sorrows press, and support us, when weak and ready to faint.

3. What firm support, and rich comfort, hath the christian in the view and expectation of death. The believing prospect of the immediate happiness of the soul, in the vision and enjoyment of GOD, and of the future resurrection of the body, when our bliss and glory shall be perfected, may reasonably reconcile us to the thought of taking our lodging in the grave. Since this is the will of our Divine Redeemer, let us acquiesce in it ; and *wait* in holy obedience, all the days of our appointed time *till our change come*.

4. How solicitous ought we to be, to believe *with the heart*, that JESUS died and rose again, and to embrace all those important doctrines connected with this. Such a faith is at the beginning of the christian life; and without it we cannot lead that obedient, holy life, which is preparatory to our *falling asleep in JESUS*. We are ready enough to *wish our death may be that of the righteous, and our last end like his*: But to this we can never attain, unless we *repent, believe the gospel*, and obey from the heart, its holy precepts. Would we have part in the resurrection of the just, and receive support and comfort in the expectation of it, we must *abide in the faith, abound in that hope*, which stimulates us to *purify ourselves as CHRIST is pure, and patiently continue in well-doing, seeking for glory, honor and immortality*.

Thus did our friend, whose mortal part is now before us; and hence we have plenary evidence that he *sleeps in JESUS*, and is one of those *whom GOD will bring with him*.

His character stands in no need of the "perfume of pulpit incense;" yet decency, and the expectation of this assembly require me to speak of his worth, and make mention of his virtues, that we may be persuaded to *follow him, wherein he followed CHRIST*.

The candor of all is requested, while this is attempted with much diffidence.

The Rev. BENJAMIN BRIGHAM, descended from a respectable family* and was endowed, by the GOD of nature, with excellent mental powers; which were improved by a liberal education. While resident at the university, he was noticed for his diligent application to his studies, his proficiency in knowledge, and his discreet, sober and exemplary deportment, which recommended him to the government, and gained him the esteem and respect of all his fellow students. Having completed his academic course, and received the honors of the university, he turned his chief attention to divinity. He read the scriptures with diligence and care, that he might derive knowledge from that fountain of truth; not neglecting other helps to obtain a right understanding of them, and of the scheme of divine truth. Being possessed of a clear head and penetrating mind, he soon acquired a good degree of theological knowledge.

But speculative knowledge was not the only object of his pursuit—far from this.—His desire and aim was *to know the truth, as it is in JESUS; to know the gospel, as the power of GOD and the wisdom of GOD, to his salvation.* He sought it, and

* In the town of Marlborough, Massachusetts.

did not seek in vain : He found the pearl of great price : And he rejoiced and blessed GOD, that in the divine light he saw light ; and learnt, as we have great reason to think, what is meant by this declaration. *The secret of the LORD is with them who fear him, and he will show them his covenant.*

When, after a long and distressing sickness, from which it was doubted, whether he would ever recover, he appeared in the pulpit ; his friends were highly gratified with his performances, and promised themselves, that he would be an excellent preacher, and useful minister : In this they were not disappointed.

After some time, having declined several other invitations to take the charge of souls, he accepted that from the people in this place, then few in number, and struggling with the difficulties usual in new plantations. A church was embodied here, and he ordained to the pastoral office, March 27, 1771.

He was a good divine ; Few have had a clearer knowledge of the gospel, or more just ideas of the plan of divine grace. As a minister and pastor he was laborious, faithful and prudent. His public discourses were plain, evangelic and practical. In the delivery of them he was serious, grave and affectionate ; speaking as under the im-

pression of divine truth. Lovers of the pure gospel, were pleased when they heard him.—His labors, at home and abroad, were highly acceptable. If those who heard him were not edified, it was their own fault.

In private interviews with him, his great solicitude for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his people has been much noticed;—how attentive he was to their state, and careful to adapt his public discourses to their particular circumstances and wants. He felt for those who were under serious impressions, or were exercised with temptations, or religious doubts and difficulties; and endeavoured to lead them in the way of truth and holiness. He had the best kind of learning for a gospel minister: He knew how to *spea*k a word in season to weary souls.

He greatly excelled in prudence. The wisdom of the serpent in him, was joined with the harmlessness of the dove. In him was much of that *wisdom which is from above, which is peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated*; and much of that *meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of GOD is of great price*, and greatly endears a man to his friends.

No man was more a lover of peace, or took more pains, as there was occasion, to keep and promote it, both among his own people and else-

where. The fruits of his labors, in this respect, among his people, are very manifest, and may they long continue.

In private life, as an *husband*, he was tender and affectionate, as a *parent*, kind and prudent—as a *neighbor*, benevolent and hospitable—as a *friend*, firm, and faithful—and as a *christian*, very exemplary.

Such was the *man*, the *christian* and the *minister*, whose death we now lament. Blessed be GOD, we do not *mourn as those who have no hope*. We look forward to the time, when his dust shall be re-animated, when, if *we are faithful to the death*, we shall, with him, receive *the crown of life*.

You, *Madam*, who have long respected him as *your pastor*, and, for some years, revered and loved him as *your husband*, must sensibly feel your loss. But your loss is his gain—an end is put to his pains, to the severity of which for several months, you have been, the sorrowful witness.—If you firmly believe in *JESUS, who died, rose again, and now liveth*, the thought, that he is now asleep in Him, will afford you consolation. You are acquainted with the solitary state of widowhood.* We trust you have found by happy ex-

* Mrs BRIEHAM, before her marriage with the Rev. Mr. BRIEHAM, was the widow of JOHN MELLEN, Esq. who was one of the first settlers in Fitzwilliam.

perience, that our GOD is the widow's judge. Confide in him.—We cordially wish you divine comforts—that you may yet see good—continue to reflect with satisfaction on the connection you have had with this servant of CHRIST, and show, by your whole deportment, that *it is good for you to be afflicted.*

The children of the deceased, we respect as the *children of a friend, and brother* greatly beloved. We wish them suitably to see, and acknowledge, the hand of GOD, in this painful stroke, and patiently to bear it.

The best thing, *my friends*, which we can ask of GOD for you, is, that you may imbibe the same spirit, which, we think actuated your excellent parent, and imitate the virtues and graces which he exhibited in his life. Let it be your care to conduct worthily, that you may do honor to his memory, and be respected, not for his sake only, but for your own. Let it comfort you, that he is gone to the heavenly rest. Bear in mind the excellent counsels and advices he has frequently given you; especially in regard to your spiritual, and eternal interests. Considering how religiously and holily he lived with you, tread in his steps and follow his example—Be greatly solicitous for your better part, your souls.—*Give diligence to make your calling and election*

sure, that you may not be seen at the left hand of CHRIST, by your pious Father, in the day of judgment.

We do not forget the aged *mother*, nor the *brothers* and *sisters* of the deceased. They surely must be much affected with the removal of so excellent a *son* and *Brother*. It reminds them that the time is short, and admonishes them to be also ready. Making this their chief care, they will neither forget him nor mourn to excess for *him*.

But none are more interested in this painful article in the divine conduct, and none, it is presumed are more sensibly affected with it, than the *church* and *christian* society in this town.—*Their cordial friend and faithful affectionate pastor*, is removed from them.—*No more*, respected friends, will you see *that* countenance, which wore the aspect of benevolence : *No more* will you hear that voice, which called you to virtue and glory, invited you to CHRIST, and urged you to believe in him to the saving of your souls. *No more* will he visit you in your afflictions, to advise, to comfort and pray with you.—Yet *my friends*, you will not repine, but *go and tell JESUS*, and ask his help, his blessing, and his comforts in your present sorrow.

Had it pleased our heavenly Father, your late beloved pastor, although in the decline of life,

might have been capable of serving you, many years more, in the gospel of his Son: And his increased knowledge and experience, especially in religion, might have rendered his labors more useful. But he hath ordered it otherwise. Your duty is to submit, and comfort yourselves with these words, *he sleeps in JESUS*, and will be again raised to life.

Be careful to recollect the truths he has taught you, the counsels he has given you, and the example he has set you. *Remember how you have received, and heard; and hold fast, and repent.*

In this day of trouble you will surely remember, with gratitude, the great benefits you have received from GOD, by his deceased servant:—How he came among you *in your infant state*, took and led you by the hand, fed you with the *sincere milk of the word*, and, as it were, nursed and brought you up as children:—How, *as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST*, he endured great hardships among you, felt for, and suffered with you in all your sufferings:—And what a blessing and comfort he has been to you, during these twenty-eight years:—What love and friendship have subsisted between you and him:—And what peace and quietness have prevailed in the society. Be exhorted still to *follow the things which make for peace,*

and things whereby one may edify another. May the great and good shepherd keep you in his holy protection, guide you in the way you should go, and give you, in due time, another pastor according to his heart.

My brethren, in the christian ministry, now present, will candidly receive a few hints, designed to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance.

The association of pastors, of which our deceased brother was a deserving member, now denominated, *the Westminster Association*, was formed in the latter part of the year 1780, and the major part of its members, at first, were persons who had been co-temporary at the university. Such unanimity and friendship has generally prevailed in it, and such has been the care of its members, to encourage and strengthen each other's hands, in the common cause, that it might, with propriety, have been called, *the Friendly Association*.

Happily united in sentiment and affection, death has made no breach upon us, although our fears of it have sometimes been excited, till the present sorrowful instance: With this we are deeply affected.—We see and feel that we shall not be suffered to continue by reason of death; that shortly we must put off our clay tabernacles, and give an account of our stewardship.

What then remains, my brethren, but to keep that which has been committed to our trust; to fulfil our ministry with diligence and fidelity; not to neglect the gift that is in us; but to take heed to ourselves and to our doctrine, that we may both save ourselves, and them who hear us.

It is a time of declension and danger in the church of CHRIST. Let us therefore be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die.

As a bright star is extinguished in our hemisphere. Let us arise and shine more than ever. Let us trim our lamps and watch; for we know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh to remove us.

Permit me to close, with a few words to this numerous assembly.

You see my hearers that there is one event to ministers and people. Pastors and their flocks must all die, all mingle in the dust, and in the resurrection arise and appear together to the final judgement, that they may receive according to the deeds done in the body:—This will be a solemn meeting to ministers and their people—At that time great will be the mutual joy of faithful ministers and their pious hearers. They will both receive the

approbation of their judge, and be welcomed into his everlasting kingdom.

But what will then be the pain and horror of unfaithful ministers, and their wicked people who must all receive the reward of their evil deeds!

Who can conceive the anguish of those, on that awful day, who refuse to repent and believe the gospel, when they shall see those faithful pastors, who compassionately besought them to be reconciled to GOD, entering with CHRIST, and all his saints, into eternal glory, and they themselves shut out!

Seriously ponder on these things, my hearers, and make the proper application to yourselves, during the present solemnity. And *repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD.*

A M E N.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO DIE IN
THE LORD.

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED APRIL 25, 1793,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. LUCY BRIGHAM,

CONSORT OF

THE REV. BENJAMIN BRIGHAM. A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FITZWILLIAM.

WHO DIED THE 22d OF THE SAME MONTH IN THE
53d YEAR OF HER AGE.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
BY JOSEPH LEE, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN ROYALSTON.

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PUBLISHED BY DESIRE.

PRINTED AT BROOKFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS,
BY E. MERRIAM & Co.
February, 1800.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO DIE IN
THE LORD.

S E R M O N

Delivered April 25, 1833

AT THE FUNERAL OF

Mrs. LUCY BRIGHAM

CONSORT OF

THE REV. BENJAMIN BRIGHAM, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN LITTLETON

WHO DIED THE 11th OF THE SAME MONTH OF THE

33d YEAR OF HER AGE

BY JOSEPH LEE, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN LITTLETON

BLESSED BY DESIRE

Printed at BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,

By E. MERRIAM & CO.

February, 1834.

TO THE READER.

AS the following Sermon was delivered some years ago, it may be proper to inform the public, that, at that time, some, out of respect to the memory of the deceased, proposed the printing of it: But the matter subsided. When it was moved to have the preceding discourse published, this came to mind again, and was put into the proposals without the knowledge of the Author. From motives of respect to those who proposed it—to the children of the deceased—and his other esteemed friends in Fitzwilliam, he has consented to its publication; notwithstanding the coincidence of sentiment, in certain parts, with the preceding Discourse. He takes the freedom to inform the candid reader, that he was so affected with the death of his Rev. and dear brother and friend, that when requested to officiate, as a comforter and monitor at his funeral, not expecting the publication of either discourse, he did not recollect, or attend to what had been said on the former occasion, but applied himself wholly

to the latter sorrowful event.—He prays GOD, that these plain discourses, which express the feelings of his heart, on those painful occasions, may be acceptable and beneficial to his friends, and all who may honor them with their perusal.

THE AUTHOR.

As the following sermon was delivered some years ago, it may be proper to inform the public, that, at that time, some, out of respect to the memory of the deceased, proposed the printing of it. But the matter passed. When it was moved to have the preceding discourse published, this came to mind again, and was put into the proposer's hands the knowledge of the author. From motives of respect to those who proposed it—in the children of the church—and his other esteemed friends in Tisbury, he has consented to its publication; notwithstanding the coincidence of sentiment, in certain parts, with the preceding Discourse. He takes the freedom to inform the candid reader, that he was so affected with the death of his dear and dear brother and friend, that when requested to assist, as a comforter and minister at his funeral, not expecting the publication of either discourse, he did not recollect, or attend to what had been said on the former occasion, but applied himself wholly



A.

S E R M O N.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, xiv. 13.

AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAY-
ING UNTO ME; WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE
DEAD, WHO DIE IN THE LORD.

THERE is something particularly striking
and interesting to our feelings in funeral
solemnities. Do we hear the distant tolling bell,
or see the funeral procession, even of a stranger,
our hearts are affected; a gloom instantly spreads
over our minds; we feel the truth of the wise
man's observation, *This is the end of all men,**
and, for a moment or two, are led almost insensi-
bly, *to lay it to heart.*

Much more are we affected, when we see an ac-
quaintance or a friend shrouded in death, and all

* Eccl. vii. 2.

the rites of sepulture preparing :—When we behold the tender husband or the affectionate wife, the dejected parent or the respectful child, in the apparatus of sorrow, performing the last offices of humanity and friendship to their *deceased*, whom they place out of their sight, in *the house appointed for all living*. At such a time, if ever, we feel our concern with death, and pray with the Psalmist *Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am.** May we now experience the benefit and satisfaction, which result from such devout sentiments.

Being requested, by *my afflicted Brother*, to speak on this sorrowful occasion, it is my wish and aim to be a faithful monitor to all, and a sympathizing comforter to those whom GOD hath called to mourning.—For this purpose your attention is invited to the passage of Scripture now read.

Without multiplying observations on the connection in which the words stand, they will be taken in a detached view, as suggesting some instructive truths, relating to the duty, the privileges and happiness of christians.

But it is proper to observe, that it was the intention of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, who gave

• Psalm xxxix. 4.

this Revelation, that his people should take particular notice of the beatitude in our text. It was introduced by a voice from heaven and a special charge to write: *I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD, from henceforth; Yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.*

In discoursing at this time we may inquire, what to die in the LORD supposes and implies? And, in what their blessedness consists.

We would, first, inquire, what to die in the LORD supposes and implies.

It is JESUS CHRIST who is here called LORD, this name seems to be peculiarly appropriated to him in the New-Testament. He is the LORD, the proprietor and sovereign, both of the dead and living; *to this end he both died, rose and revived.* To Him real christians live, and to Him they die: The first is their duty; the last their privilege.

JESUS CHRIST came to save his people, not from dying, but from their sins, to redeem them from the grave, and from the power of the second death. He now gives life to their souls, and makes the death of the body a blessing to them:

Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

This dying in the LORD, supposes, in the first place, being in him.

The scriptures speak of being in CHRIST. We read of babes in CHRIST :* St. Paul speaks of those who were in CHRIST before him ; and, says, I knew a man in CHRIST. To be in CHRIST is peculiar to believers, and preceeds dying in him.

To be in CHRIST implies not only a profession of religion, or enrolling of our names among his people, but unfeigned faith in Him, as our Prince and Savior. When *we are in CHRIST*, he dwells in us by his spirit, and we abide in him by faith ; *For if any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature.**

THIS LEADS US TO OBSERVE,

2. To die in the LORD supposes living in Him and to Him.

As natural death supposes a natural life, which then becomes extinct ; so does dying in the LORD, a living to Him, and in Him ; that is, the leading an holy and spiritual life in obedience to Him. We cannot *die in the LORD*, unless we are as St. Paul was when he said, *I am crucified with CHRIST, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but CHRIST, liveth in me, and the life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me.†*

* 1 Cor. iii. 1. and Rom. xvi 7. 11 Cor. xii. 2. † 11 Cor. v. 17 ‡ Gal. ii. 20.

The real christian is in the world, and attends to its business, but he is not *of the world*. His affections are *set on things above*, and not on things on earth*. He feels that *his rest is not here*: that here he hath no continuing city: He therefore deserves a better country, even an heavenly; and a city whose builder and maker is GOD†.

The true christian also considers, that *he is not his own*, but the LORD's being bought with a price; therefore he labors to glorify GOD in his body and spirit,‡ which he can do only by living in obedience to the gospel. This he considers, not only as what he owes to GOD, but as a necessary preparation for the enjoyment of present peace, and everlasting felicity; since it is the unalterable decree of heaven, that without *purity of heart, and holiness of life, no man shall see the LORD*. Wherefore real christians, actuated by the principles of love to the divine character, and gratitude for the blessings of divine grace, make it their business to do the will of GOD, to *walk in his commandments and ordinances blameless*;§ to mortify the deeds of the body;¶—to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD.∥ And they continue in the love of GOD,

* John xv. 19. Col. iii. 2. † Hab. xi. 10, 16. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. § Luke i. 6. ¶ Rom. viii. 13. ∥ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

and in the way of well-doing, *looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life** CHRIST in them, influencing them [to the love and practice of universal holiness, is their hope of glory.†

In outward respects, true christians may not be distinguished from others ; but inwardly there is a wide difference. They are actuated by different principles and motives, and have different aims and ends in their lives and actions. They place not their chief good in this world, or in the things of it ; but they regard GOD as their portion and happiness, and desire his favor above all things : They confide in his mercy, through JESUS CHRIST, for pardon and salvation ; and labor to approve themselves in his sight. Although they live in the world, *they live above it ; they live according to GOD in the Spirit,†* And they do not feel happy, unless they find in themselves a growing conformity to the divine will, and have some perception, and sense of the divine goodness and love.

3. To die in the LORD, is to die in a state of union and devotedness to the LORD JESUS CHRIST : Or to have at the time of death, a

* Jude 21.

† Col. i. 27.

† 1. Pet. iv. 6.

special interest in the grace, the blessings and promises of the gospel.

This is the happy case of all who, *with the heart believe in the LORD JESUS*, and are faithful to him, until death. Having committed their souls to CHRIST, and devoted their lives to his service, real christians are *kept by the power of GOD, through faith unto eternal salvation*. Neither death, nor any thing else is able *to separate them from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD*. Having been with them in life, helped them in their weakness, and delivered them out of all their troubles, He will not leave them, when they pass *through the valley of the shadow of death*.

4. *Dying in the LORD* may imply dying, when actively engaged in his service, and following after holiness.

We would not say, that real christians may not die, while there is a decline in the religious life, and a suspension of holy exercises, and yet be safe, as to their eternal interests. It is not for us to limit the Holy One of Israel, or say that He never corrects his people, by inflicting death upon them, whilst turning aside from Him, by reason of which, they will not have so high a seat in glory, as they might otherwise have attained. But such do not, in the fullest sense, die in the LORD. Those most

properly, may be said *to die in the LORD*, who, at the time of their departure, are about His work. *Blessed are those servants whom the LORD when he cometh shall find watching.** It hath been the happy lot of many to fall by death, when actively fighting the fight of faith, and engaged in important services for GOD and his people ;—and many while about their LORD's work in less matters. To die at such times, is devoutly to be desired.—How agreeable to end our work, and receive the reward of grace, in the same moment !—To finish the good warfare, and, in the same instant, receive the crown of life !

But we may die, while about our LORD's work, although we be not engaged in active services. “ The christian's business is, to *bear* the will of GOD, as well as to *do* it.” If we regard the will of GOD in trouble and sickness, and patiently bear it, we are as really about our master's work, as when employed in the most active and important services. The approach of death is usually gradual : Nature decays, or diseases prey upon us, till the lamp of life be quenched. If we bow to the divine will, and patiently endure all this, we die doing the LORD's work. Once more,

5. Dying in the LORD implies the exercise of faith in CHRIST, with respect to death, and re-

* Luke xii. 37.

signing up our souls into his hand. The true
 christian conceiving of death, not merely as *the*
end of all men, but as *his* passage into the presence
 of his GOD and Saviour, views it as a blessing and
 privilege : He believes in JESUS as *the resurrec-*
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* 1 Cor. xv. 31.

like St. Stephen, committed their departing spirits into the hands of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We proceed, secondly, to consider the blessedness of those who die in the LORD.

This blessedness does not consist so much in the hope and comfort they have in death, as in the great things which follow it. Of *these* therefore are we to speak, rather than of any comfort they may have in their last moments. Yet we may observe, that the saint is blessed, even in his conflicts with death.

Death casts a gloom upon the spirits of men; they cannot endure to think of it, shrink back at its approach, and would avoid its stroke: Yet die they must, and appear at the judgment. But the real christian, who has learnt to consider death as the passage into the presence of his LORD, gradually rises superior to the fear of it. And although the flesh be weak, and nature recoils at its dissolution, yet the spirit is willing, and rejoices, as about to meet a kind messenger, sent to deliver him from the abodes of sin and sorrow, and prepare the way for his removal into the realms of love, peace and holiness. In such a view of death, the sincere christian may abound in comfort and joy. If possessed of his reason, and his mental powers be not overpowered by disease, he must,

at least be calm and resigned;—willing to depart and be with *CHRIST* which is infinitely better than to continue here. Blessed are those who die in such a frame. I proceed to observe,

Those who die in the *LORD* are blessed, as they are beyond all that is laborious and painful, in the service of *GOD*.

Although the commandment be holy, just and good, and in keeping it, there be great reward; yet, by reason of our weakness, and many temptations, the life of obedience is a life of labor. It is a fight and a warfare, in which, many difficulties are to be encountered, and painful conflicts endured. But after death, the righteous *rest from their labors*. There are no more briny tears of repentance no more fears from sin and temptation;—no more warring of the flesh against the spirit. No sin, or faulty imperfection attends them;—no weariness in doing the will of *GOD*:—All burdens are taken off; and they serve *GOD* in the most pure and elevated manner. Again,

Those who die in the *LORD* are blessed with the sight of *CHRIST* in his glory.

The glory of *CHRIST* is the perfection of his nature, as the Son of *GOD*, his suitableness, and sufficiency, as mediator and Savior, and the complete manner in which he accomplishes the redemption

and salvation of his people. The Saints have some perception of this glory in the present life, which induces them to put entire confidence in him : But they desire to know more of it : In this respect they are satisfied, when they enter the world of spirits ; for they are then admitted to be *where CHRIST is*, and *behold the glory which the Father hath given him.*—They *behold his face in righteousness*, contemplate his beauty, and rejoice in the emanations of his goodness and love.

Those, *who die in the LORD*, are blessed in being made perfectly like CHRIST.

We know, says the apostle, *that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* The saints now labor to purify themselves as CHRIST is pure, and to be holy as GOD is holy : Any attainments, in this respect, are to them matter of thankfulness and joy. How blessed then must they be, when they awake in his perfect likeness ?

In fine, Those who die in the LORD are blessed, as they enter into the heavenly paradise, where they receive and enjoy those great things, which GOD hath prepared for them who love Him. Thither their works of faith, love, and righteousness follow them. They have a glorious reward, receive *the crown of life*, and abide forever in his pres-

ence, *where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures forevermore.*

Thus *blessed are the dead who die in the LORD.* Who is not ready to say, let this be my happy portion.

The word and providence of GOD invite, and urge us to *that* life, which will terminate in this blessedness. What this life is, has been briefly intimated. It is a life of faith in, and of love and obedience to, CHRIST. Such a life is reasonable in itself, and as conducive to our present comfort, as to our future welfare. Is it not reasonable, that we should *believe in GOD*, and in his SON JESUS CHRIST—repent of our sins—love the LORD our GOD with all our heart, and keep his commandments? Must not this make for our present comfort, since it restrains us from nothing but what is injurious to us; nor requires any thing of us, but what tends to the improvement of our minds in knowledge, virtue and holiness? We have every encouragement to devote ourselves to this life: Such as the promise of pardon, acceptance with GOD, adoption into the family of heaven, the assistance of the spirit, the comforts of the divine favor here, and endless felicity and glory hereafter. We have the examples of the saints, who have gone before us in the way of this life,

which they have found to be pleasantness and peace. They recommend a life of holiness, and invite us to follow them, wherein they followed CHRIST. Let us then every one, *show the same diligence of hope unto the end, that we be not slothful, but the followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

We have known those who have taken this course, and died in hope, if not in joy. Among these we may reckon our *friend*, whose mortal part lies *there*. I am far from being fond of funeral encomiums; yet something seems to be due to the memory of one, who has acted her part well, in the station, where providence fixed her.

We have reason to think she had duly considered the nature of religion, and felt the importance of a life of faith and holiness, in order to please GOD, and die in peace and safety. Her love to the word and ordinances of GOD, and to his people:—Her attention to the duties of piety and devotion, and her general deportment evince the sincerity of her profession. The strict performance of relative duties, is essential to religion, and one of the best proofs of genuine godliness. In these our deceased friend was very exemplary. As a *wife*, she was affectionate, attentive to her worthy partner and solicitous for his comfort and useful-

acts :—As a *parent*, she was careful to give her children a good education, to preserve them from vice and irreligion, and direct them in the paths of wisdom and virtue. She was very indulgent to them, yet maintained her dignity, and secured respect and obedience. She was very discreet and industrious in the management of her domestic concerns. She looked well to the ways of her household, and eat not the bread of idleness.—As a *neighbor* she was kind and obliging; and to those, who resorted to her house, pleasant and hospitable. *Her children rise up and call her blessed, and her husband also, and acquaintance praise her.*

The virtues of the deceased are held up to view, not to draw unmerited commendations, but to excite others to do likewise.

She has done her work—but much of ours is yet to be done. What repentance—what faith—what reformation—what love and obedience are necessary, my friends, in order to prepare us to *die in the LORD*? The arrows of death are flying around us, and in an hour, when we think not of it, the Son of man cometh. Let us *watch* therefore and *pray always*, that we may be accounted *worthy to stand before the Son of man.*

But propriety calls our attention to our afflicted brother, his children and friends.

Reverend and very dear Sir, having drank deep in this bitter cup of affliction, I can truly sympathize with you on this sorrowful occasion.*—Your trouble recalls my own—my heart still bleeds at the wounds it has received. But the voice of our LORD is, *Be still and know that I am GOD.* Not presuming to instruct you, we may *stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance*, and intreat you to ponder on those things, wherewith you have comforted others, in their afflictions, and from which, you have already derived support.

Your stroke is heavier than your groaning, you consider that you have *received* much good, at the hand of GOD, and shall you not receive evil?

You will think of the kindness of heaven in giving you a *good wife*, and continuing her to you for many years. Your trouble is great, but such an event would have been more distressing to you, had it taken place, when your children were small, and when you was struggling with those difficulties and hardships, which cannot be avoided by those who settle in a new and rough country.—You have now no very young children—no tender infant to excite anxious care, and press to an aching heart.—You do not mourn as without

* The speaker had buried two partners, and was then in a state of widowhood.

hope— You anticipate the day, when you shall meet your esteemed partner, in the regions of light and love ; where you shall unite, in services more refined and spiritual, than any we are capable of here, and in enjoyments substantial and eternal.

It cannot be long, dear brother, before *we* must put off mortality, and enter into the unseen world. Let us *give diligence to make our calling and election sure.* This will help to dry up our tears, to solace us under all the burdens of life, excite us to *fulfil our ministry*, and fit us to *finish our course with joy.*

Our young friends, the *sons and daughters* of the *deceased*, will accept our condolence. We are afflicted in your afflictions ; and pray that you may have divine consolations, and grace wisely to improve this breach.

Your worthy *father* will be careful to administer those comforts, and to give you those counsels you need. His tenderness for you, and his own concern in this foreaffliction, will enable him to do it to the best advantage. Lend him your attention, receive his advice with affection and gratitude, and give him the pleasure of seeing you arise victorious and godly. Bless GOD, that you have been, for so many years, under the direction of a mother, so tender and prudent, and ever attentive to your

good—You can recollect many of her counsels: Let them, in every instance where they still apply, be the rule of your temper and conduct.—Her solicitude for your welfare has been very apparent. Possibly you may have thought her requisitions, in some cases, too strict, but experience, if it has not already done it, will teach you the wisdom of them, and you will feel your obligations to respect and love her memory. Keep in view the virtues and graces, which shone in her—tread in her steps, and be ambitious to excell in all goodness.

The *sister* of the deceased with her *consort*, now present, will believe us when we tell them, we feel with them in this trouble. The separation between two sisters, united by the ties of nature and affection, must be exceeding painful.—Particular circumstances have made these ties tender.—You have known, and, we trust, long considered, that this separation might take place, and were in a measure prepared for it. May you have divine support, and be quickened in your preparation for your own departure, that you may be numbered with those who *die in the LORD*. When you return be mindful to comfort your *aged mother*, that she may be the better able to bear with patience this afflictive event.



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S. E. R. M. O. N.



MARSH



2.

DOCTOR DANIEL

J. R. M. O. N.



THE BRITISH MUSEUM

